

SUTR^O

The present dangerous Condition of the PROTESTANTS in IRELAND; with a new Order of Tyrconil's: 4362

In a Letter from Dublin, February 19. 1688.

WE live now in this place in great Melancholy and Distraction, having the apprehensions of a bloody War before our Eyes, and the certainty of a Famine. The Country is already destroyed; hardly one Protestant having any thing left, save where they are in Arms, and preserve themselves by Force. Lord Deputy is daily pestered with complaints and petitions, but is not able to give any Redress; he has not a Farthing of Money, and the Country is so destroyed, that I am confident he could not keep together Six thousand Men in the Field, though he is daily baking Biscakes for provision. They have already plundered, slaughtered and destroyed as much as would, right managed, have fed an Army of Forty Thousand for a whole Year; and they take no care to put any Corn in the Ground to be Stock for the next Year. The people in the North are continually alarmed by their popish Neighbours, who, by the persuasion of the Priests, have all left their Farms, & betaken themselves to Mountains & Fastnesses, where they at present live by their Cattle, & what they can steal, & exercise themselves in their Armes. The Protestants were too strong for them in the open country, and would not suffer them to Rob or plunder and use their Armes, but obliged them to plow and Till their Ground as they used to do, which they will not now endure. Some Papists are very sensible of the Mischiefe of this, and do openly say, That there needs no Army to Conquer them, for Famine will desiray them before August. I know this to be Judge D, since having seen it under his, and Judge M's hand. The Judges have appointed their Circuits as usual, but every body Laughs at them, knowing that they dare not go them; they threaten to hang all Robbers, Cow-stealers, Tories, &c. but if they do so the King will have a very thin Army, and Jeffrey's Campaign in the West will be nothing to theirs. I am afraid that then they will hang protestants for pretended plots. They have clap'd up severall on that pretence. A Gentleman in Connaught, one Mr. French had Six hundred Sheep stoln out of his Flock in one Night; he caught some Six of the Thieves and came up to complain, but as soon as his back was turned the Justice of the peace, a papist, contrived their Escape, having denied to sign a warrant before, or to take Examination, because, said he, It reflects on the Army. Fifty of these Sheep were found killed in one Cabbin, and another Cabbin Ten Cows dead and stinking; for they have no Salt, and this is their usual way of disposing of what they steal or rob, or else cut their throats and let them lie, pretending it will make Land Cheap. There lay a Troop of Dragoons at Armagh, they came out and plundered the Country of their Oars and other things. This provoked the people to such a degree that they resolved to disarm them, which they did thus. They seized the Officers in their Quarters, the Dragoons made to the Sessions-House, where they kept Guard, but they quickly broke open the Door and put in the Officers before them; the Dragoons durst not fire on them for fear of killing their own Officers, and so were obliged to quit their Arms, Horses and Boots, and are come up to Dublin to complain. About Antrim there happened another Shuffl. You know Lough Neah, and the Ban-River divide that Country towards Antrim side, they are generally Protestants, but on every side towards the Lough it is a course woody Country planted with Papists, here one of the Neals had raised Men, and finding his Quarters inconvenient, intended to carry them over to Antrim side. The Protestants got into a Body, and resolved to oppose them; Lady Marchioness of Antrim heard of the Matter, and being a Discreet Lady, interposed her Interest and Advice, and so ordered the Matter, that the Papists were to go back, and the Protestants to suffer them without any further trouble; they padd'd at Toam in a Boat which could not carry them all back at once: some of those that remained wrested, I think, a Pistol out of one of the Protestants hands, who thereupon cryed out he was robbed; this feared the Rabble, and before the Commanders could come to quiet them, some shots were made, and one or two of the Papists killed: this makes a mighty noise in the Castle, and perhaps may do so with you, but there is no more in it as I am informed: Lord Kingston designed to lollarge his Quarters to the Boyle, but some say Coll Mac Donnell prevented him, by sealing the narrow passages of the Curleys, some Mountains he was to pass, others say he gained them, and is come to Roscommon and Castle-Cost, two of the strongest places in Connaught, and threatens Athlone, but this I do not believe, and we cannot receive a Letter from thence, or the North, if it be not by a great chance.

Captain Richard Coote has gotten some Four hundred Men together about Bay, the Lord Deputy threatens him hard, and truly if he attempt him, it will go hard with him, for he has no Assistance nearer him than Sligo, which is Fiftey Connaught Miles near one hundred English Miles from him; 'tis a pity he should be so far. We cannot hear anything from Munster. There went about two or three days ago some persons by order of the Lord Deputy to every House in this City, to take an account of the Inhabitants, and it is now certainly designed that every Shop-keeper shall Quarter Men, and every person that has any manner of Trade, and a great many Companies and Troops are daily coming to Town, and others raising. And the Lord Mayor's Regiment is now compleated and Exercised in every Corner. All this is directly contrary to what was promised Lord Mountjoy at his going to France; but the reason is plain, If any Forces come from England the Country is so wasted that they cannot take the Field so soon as they expected, and therefore they must flock to the City, and the Consequence will quickly appear to be this, That they will in spite of Lord Deputy, or by his Committance, plunder the City, as they have plundered the Country; they promised the Protestants very fair if they would but stay amongst them: And now it appears what they intended, first to plunder them of all their Goods, and then Disarm and take their Horses; so far they have gone in the Country already, and the next, no doubt, will be stripping and knocking on the head; which will certainly be done where they have power before April, though Five Thousand at Heath, or Bullock, or Bay,

at this time would prevent it. If the Protestants had not depended on that, but sent for Arms and Ammunition at their own cost, and had used their own strength, the business had been in another posture before this; and if they had but Officers, and were furnished for War, and encouraged by Commission which they want, they might now march up to Dublin in spite of all the opposition the Government could make as yet; but it will be otherwise in a very little time, that is, as soon as Dublin is disarm'd. Though Chester Seamen play the Rogue most egregiously with us. There came in a great many of them, but brought us nothing but Irish Soldiers; Eaton brought 100 of their best men in his Ship, but not so much as one Tun of Coals, which are now at 30 s. a Tun, upon which the Lord Deputy published the Order annexed; 'tis to be sent to every Port; 'twas Transcribed in the Custom-house, and the Direction added to it, to the Commissioners, but the Commissioners would not suffer it to pass so, but had it Transcribed anew; the reason was, because they would not be concerned in an Order they reckoned illegal: One thing seems very strange, Lord Deputy knows not what to do with the Men he hath already raised, and yet he daily, as I am informed, grants new Commissions. I find all the Protestants in the County of Meath, and West Meath, have their Horses and Arms taken from them, by Order from my Lord Deputy, which is put in Execution with such Rigour by Sir Edward Tyrrell and one of the Nugents, that they have not left them a Sword or Sythe. We certainly shal have the like usage as soon as they think Forces enough are come up to master us: They not only disarmed but rifled the Gentlemen's Houses, and stript a great many: We reckon 1200 Irish Soldiers have been brought over to us in this Port by the Packer-boats and Chester men which will do more mischief than 5000 new raised Men.

There is a Report as if a Regiment were landed in the North, and they were besieging Knockferges, which has been signified to the Lord Deputy; and that they cannot hold out Seven Days for want of Provision; but of this I do not believe one word, no more than of another Report, That Guns have been heard at Sea off Wexford, and a Ship seen sink; however this Report disturbs many. R. C, Lord Granard hath sent off his Lady, and as soon as able will skulk off himself with a whole load of Curles from every body almost, because he would not seize Dublin, which they say he might have done and saved Ireland, but perhaps there is no reason for this; but their Rage against him is nothing to that against the Gentlemen who have deserted us, whom they reckon their betrayers, and very great Fools and Villains; for say they, It's impossible but they should know the state of Ireland, and the great Danger and Necessity of the Protestants, whose Throats they have left under the Knaife, and had but every one of them contributed Ten Pound to buy Arms and Ammunition, and sent them into Ireland; and had they come back with but Six Men apiece, till more Forces could have been sent, they might have saved more of their own Stock and Goods than six times this would have cost them; whereas, now their Cowardice, Folly and Knaavery, has lost them the profits of their Estates, ruined their Tenants and Neighbours, and undone the Kingdom for many years, not one of them having sent so much as a Barrel of Powder to their friends, whom they knew to have been in danger, who if they had been Attacked, must have been, and may yet be lost for want of it; Thus they rall, and some swear they will joyn with the Irish, to exclude such Rascals for ever: And to say truth, it seems a little strange that none of them would take care to send a Ship to the North or Sligo with Arms and Ammunition, of which they might have made gain even by way of Merchandise; and I humbly conceive it would have been no Treason in England to have brought or sent them to that purpose; and it had been but generous, since there was a Party ready to venture their Lives for the Protestant Interest in Ireland, to have come over back, and ventured themselves with them, and such will certainly look on them with a great deal both of hatred and contempt, and I am afraid will joyn in a little time with the Papists, and take Reprisals out of the Absentees Estates, which will certainly be allowed them.

I have not received any Letter from England, or the Countrey this three weeks.

By the Lord Deputy General, and General Gover-
nour of Ireland.
To the Commissioners of His Majestie's Revenue.

Tyrconil,

Whereas, contrary to the usage of all times and places, it is of late become a practice to bring into the Kingdom empty Ships, without any loading of Coals or other goods, on purpose only to Export Passengers, Household and Shop Goods, with Plate Money, and other necessary Supports of this Kingdom: For the prevention of which mischief, we do hereby Declare and Order, That all Ships coming from any part whatsoever, whether with loading of Goods or in Ballast only, shall be freely permitted to take in and deport any of the Native Commodities of the Kingdom, but not with any Passengers or Goods whatsoever; and all Ships which shall bring in any Coal or other Merchandise, shall be permitted to carry out not only the Native Commodities, but such Passengers or other Goods as shall be suffered to pass by Warrant under our hand; But no Passenger shall be permitted to depart this Kingdom without our special Licence, and that no Goods whatsoever be Exported without payment of full Custom, according to the Rate or Value, and not by Bill of Store, as hath been of late practised. And hereof the Commissioners of the Revenue, and all other Officers of the Custom, in the several parts of this Kingdom, are to take notice and see the same executed accordingly. Given at His Majesties Castle of Dublin, the 14th of Februry, 1689.

W. Ellis.